

Testimony - Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
Congresswoman Shelley Berkley
March 29, 2000
253 Russell Senate Office Building

MR. CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO TESTIFY.

MARCH MADNESS IS UPON US, AND ILLEGAL GAMBLING ON BASKETBALL IS SWEEPING THE COUNTRY.

WE'RE SURE THAT YOU'RE SHOCKED TOO, BUT WE'VE LEARNED THAT ILLEGAL OFFICE-POOLS ARE OPERATING RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSES...HERE ON CAPITOL HILL!
SHOCKING, BUT TRUE! ILLEGAL GAMBLING ON THE HILL!

NOW, OFFICE POOLS ARE REGARDED AS A HARMLESS PASTIME. BUT THERE IS ILLEGAL GAMBLING GOING ON THAT WE SHOULD BE FIGHTING AGAINST. ORGANIZED ON-CAMPUS AND OFF-CAMPUS BETTING OPERATIONS WILL RAKE IN MASSIVE PROFITS, RUINING LIVES ON AND OFF CAMPUS.

UNFORTUNATELY, SOME MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THE NCAA THINK THE BEST WAY TO COMBAT THE MENACE OF ILLEGAL SPORTS-BOOKMAKING (AND THIS IS SHOCKING) IS TO OUTLAW LEGAL SPORTS-BETTING IN NEVADA!

NEVER MIND THAT NEVADA'S LEGAL SPORTS-BETTING IS STRICTLY REGULATED, TAXED, AND AVAILABLE ONLY TO PERSONS OVER 21 WHO ARE PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN NEVADA.

THE NCAA STILL WANTS TO OUTLAW IT. THE NCAA PERSISTS IN PUSHING ILLOGICAL LEGISLATION (HR 3575, S. 2021 AND S.2267.)

THIS LEGISLATION TAKES THE UPSIDE-DOWN POSITION THAT THE NATION'S \$380 BILLION DOLLAR A YEAR ILLEGAL SPORTS-GAMBLING PROBLEM WILL GO AWAY IF

CONGRESS OUTLAWS LEGAL WAGERING IN NEVADA, A REGULATED BUSINESS THAT GENERATES FAR LESS THAN 1% OF THE ILLEGAL ACTION IN THE OTHER 49 STATES! IT DOES NOTHING TO FIGHT ILLEGAL GAMBLING!

THE SPONSORS OF THIS LEGISLATION FAIL TO ANSWER THE THRESHOLD QUESTION OF HOW CLOSING LEGAL SPORTS BOOKS IN ONE STATE WILL DO ANYTHING ABOUT ILLEGAL WAGERING BY COLLEGE STUDENTS AND OTHERS IN THE OTHER 49 STATES.

THE SPONSORS CLAIM THAT IT WILL "SEND A MESSAGE" TO YOUNG PEOPLE. WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO THE CONGRESS, WE SINCERELY DOUBT THAT YOUNG PEOPLE KNOW OR CARE WHETHER GAMBLING IS LEGAL IN NEVADA, MUCH LESS THAT CONGRESS HAS ACTED.

WE NEED BETTER EDUCATION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT, NOT A PUNITIVE MEASURE AGAINST ONE STATE'S PRIMARY INDUSTRY.

CLOSING OUR SPORTS BOOKS TO SEND THIS MESSAGE IS LIKE CLOSING RESTAURANTS TO "SEND A MESSAGE" TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT ALCOHOL.

WE NEED LEGISLATION THAT WILL TAKE ILLEGAL SPORTS BETTING HEAD-ON.

THAT'S WHY I AM INTRODUCING THE ILLEGAL SPORTS BETTING ENFORCEMENT ACT.

LET'S COMPARE LEGISLATION.

MY BILL BOOSTS LAW ENFORCEMENT'S EFFORTS TO CRACK DOWN ON ILLEGAL BETTING OPERATIONS HITTING HARD AT THE ILLEGAL BOOKMAKING RINGS.

THE NCAA BILL DOES ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO HELP LAW ENFORCEMENT.

MY BILL WOULD INVESTIGATE THE SCOPE AND UNCOVER THE CAUSES OF ILLEGAL CAMPUS-BETTING.

THE NCAA BILL DOES NOTHING. NO STUDIES, NO INVESTIGATIONS, NO PUBLIC

SERVICE STATEMENTS, NOTHING.

MY BILL CALLS ON THE NCAA TO STEP UP GAMBLING PREVENTION PROGRAMS ON CAMPUSES. THE NCAA-PROPOSED BILL TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITY.

MR. CHAIRMAN, NEVADA IS NOT THE PROBLEM.
PLEASE LOOK AT THE ILLEGAL SPORTS BETTING ENFORCEMENT ACT.

IT IS CLEARLY THE BETTER CHOICE.

THANK YOU.